

latest observation. Now, with the woman that visited his office, and his asking her unsolicited opinion, did the gentleman ask her what she thought about the Lofgren substitute?

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, let me continue on with the Lofgren substitute.

Mr. CONYERS. Did the gentleman ask her?

Mr. HUTCHINSON. No, I did not ask her, sir. I did not.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN).

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to oppose this bill. I ask my colleagues to look at this legislation for what it is, not for what it claims to be.

On its face this bill could seem as an attempt to provide protections for pregnant women from assault and to provide prosecutors with another tool to punish those who cause the non-consensual termination of a pregnancy. However, on closer examination, this bill sets the stage for a legislative assault on *Roe v. Wade* by treating a fetus from the moment of conception as an individual with extensive legal rights, distinct from the mother.

Every time a criminal causes injury or death through violence, it is a tragedy. But we must all acknowledge that an attack against an unborn child is necessarily an attack against a pregnant woman. Unfortunately, rather than supporting tougher laws against domestic violence, sexual assault and battery, we are instead debating a bill that does not even recognize the harm to a pregnant woman.

I have heard some Members debating talk about stories of people they have met. I remember in the Wisconsin legislature hearing the personal story of a woman who was beaten when pregnant and lost her child. She was also beaten right after she first got married and beaten before her pregnancy and beaten in the early stages of pregnancy. If we had tough enough laws against violence against women, it would not have created that result.

I am a cosponsor of the Violence Against Women Act which expands protections for women against callous acts of violence. I believe we would be much better served by laws to protect women, pregnant or not, from violence, instead of establishing an entirely new legal framework to protect fetal rights. By switching the focus of the crime, we are diverting attention from the victimized women.

I urge my colleagues to vote against the underlying bill and support the Lofgren amendment.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. RYUN).

Mr. RYUN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, one thing that makes America great is its longstanding tradition to defend those incapable of defending themselves. Our Founding Fathers acknowl-

edged the proverb to "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves."

It is our duty to stand up for the weaker members of society, and I believe the Unborn Victims of Violence Act does just that. Currently, when someone commits a crime in which a woman and her preborn baby are harmed, the accused can only be prosecuted for harm to the mother. This sends the wrong message. It says there is only one victim in this situation, and nothing could be further from the truth. There are two victims harmed in this crime, the mother and her preborn baby.

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My colleagues who oppose this bill want to offer a substitute that would recognize the mother as a victim, but not the baby. I would like to remind them again that half the States do not agree; fully 24 have homicide laws that recognize unborn victims.

Furthermore, and I know we discussed this today, I would like to bring to my colleagues' attention a similar act that took place in the House last year. It was in July of last year that we voted 417-0 to deny Federal funds to execute pregnant women. This bill specifically protects a "member of the species *homo sapien* at any stage of the development who is carried in the womb."

If we are willing to protect preborn babies from Federal execution, why would we let a criminal harm an innocent life without facing specific penalty?

Let me say it again: If we are willing to protect preborn babies from Federal execution, why would we let a criminal harm an innocent life without facing specific penalties?

Those who say they believe in choice should be the strongest advocates of this bill. After all, any criminal who harms a preborn baby has interfered with a woman's choice to carry that baby to term.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in voting to defend those who cannot defend themselves.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE).

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, let us be candid. This debate is all about preserving the woman's right of choice. It is about preserving a woman's right of choice at the beginning of this debate, it is about preserving a woman's right of choice at the middle of this debate, and at the conclusion of this debate, it will be all about preserving a woman's right of choice.

The women of America who are afraid of losing that right sincerely, and rightfully so, understand this debate. They understand that if the desire of this Chamber is to punish, to give jail time, to give long periods of incarceration to any heinous criminal who attacks a pregnant woman, we would pass a bill that would do that

with 435 votes, and the bill that the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LOFGREN) has brought before us does exactly that.

Now, why cannot intelligent members of this House, 435, come together on a bill that does exactly that? Why can we not design a bill like that?

The reason is that certain folks who want to take away a woman's right of choice. And I understand that their beliefs are sincere, and I respect their beliefs, but their beliefs do not respect the U.S. Constitution. Those folks have proposed language that is trying to set the stage to end the right of choice in this country. It is a calculated, concerted, and long-term plan to do that.

Let me tell my colleagues why that is important. Every morning I walk by the U.S. Supreme Court building. I live right across the street from the Supreme Court building, and every morning I look at that building, and when one looks at that building, one understands that if one vote changes, as the current President of the United States will attempt to do, there will be no longer constitutional protection in this country for a woman's right of choice, and that issue will be here in this Chamber.

Those who resist the approach of the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LOFGREN), those who resist the thing that would get 435 votes, those who resist the approach that brings union, not disunion, to this Chamber, seek to set the stage for a legislative taking away of a woman's right of choice as soon as the Supreme Court's protection for a woman's right of choice is taken away from American women. That is what this debate is about.

Support the Lofgren amendment. That is the goal we want to pursue, with 435 votes.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Washington is dead wrong. This is similar to bills that have been enacted into law in many States, and anybody who is charged for killing an unborn child would have used that constitutional argument as a defense. In no State has a Federal court or a State court struck down a similar law.

The woman who is assaulted and whose unborn child has been killed or maimed has already made her choice, and that is to bear that child. Why do we not respect the choice that that woman has made?

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT).

(Mr. DEMINT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 503, the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, and I commend the gentleman from South Carolina for introducing this legislation.

Let us consider for a moment the human side of this legislation. A friend of mine and his wife tried for years to